

MISSION STATEMENT
U.S. Education Mission to Central America
Panama and Honduras (Optional stop to Guatemala)
May 2-5, 2016

MISSION DESCRIPTION

The United States Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, is organizing an education mission to Panama and Honduras with an optional stop to Guatemala. The Department of Commerce is partnering with the Department of State's EducationUSA Advising Centers. This trade mission is designed to emphasize U.S. higher education, focusing on, in order of importance, intensive English language programs, community colleges, summer, undergraduate and graduate programs. The trade mission follows a successful trade mission to El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua in March 2015 and was of high demand given the previous successes.

This mission will seek to connect U.S. higher education institutions to potential students and university/institution partners in Central America. The mission will include student fairs organized by EducationUSA, embassy briefings, site visits, and networking events. Panama City, San Pedro Sula and Guatemala City, are three of the top cities for recruiting students from Central America to the United States. Participating in the Education Mission, rather than traveling to these markets independently, will enhance the participants ability to secure appropriate meetings, especially in light of the high level engagement and support of U.S. education by the U.S. ambassadors in Panama and Honduras.

Certain criteria must be fulfilled by schools attending this trade mission. Summer programs seeking to participate should be appropriately accredited by an accreditation body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Intensive English language programs seeking to participate should be accredited by the Commission on English Language Programs Accreditation (CEA) or appropriately accredited by an accreditation body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Community colleges, undergraduate and graduate programs seeking to participate should be accredited by a recognized accreditation body listed in Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or Accrediting Council for Education and Training (ACCET), in the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA), or any accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

COMMERCIAL SETTING

There are several types of opportunities in Central America for U.S. English as a Second Language programs, summer programs, community colleges, and U.S. universities offering undergraduate as well as graduate programs.

In March 2011, President Obama launched "100,000 Strong in the Americas" to increase educational exchanges in the Western Hemisphere. Enhancing education is a key driver in improving socioeconomic indicators in the region. "100,000 Strong" bridges the critical relationship between broader educational opportunity and greater regional

prosperity. Expanding study abroad opportunities for students, our future leaders and innovators, strengthens bi-national relations and better prepares young people for the 21st century global workforce. The goal of this initiative is to have 100,000 students moving in each direction annually by 2020. Currently, 45,000 U.S. students study in Latin America and the Caribbean and 68,000 Latin American and Caribbean students study in the United States each year. The initiative seeks to more than double these numbers in less than ten years.¹

The Western Hemisphere represents a thriving market of nearly one billion people. Approximately 40 percent of U.S. exports go to our Latin American and Caribbean neighbors, and Latin American exports to the United States are even higher. The middle class in Latin America has grown by 50 million in the last decade alone. President Obama believes that the Americas can become the most competitive region in the world. To accomplish this goal, we need to develop the skills to reach across borders to new markets, research, and opportunities.

The mission supports the Administration's Look South initiative, which encourages companies to explore opportunities in the United States' 11 free trade agreement partner countries in Latin America. Education services are in high demand throughout these growing and diversifying economies, which include Panama, Honduras, and Guatemala.

The United States has long been a top destination for students looking to study abroad from Panama, Honduras, and Guatemala. Since 2006, the United States has seen an increase in the number of Central American students. There are some 4,436 students currently studying in the United States from these three markets (1,438 Panamanian, 1,756 Honduran, and 1,252 Guatemalan students), an average 15% percent annual increase in the number of students from these three markets since the last school year. The majority of the students from these three markets currently studying in the United States are undergraduate students (undergraduates make up 70 percent of Panamanian students, 72 percent of Honduran students, and 66 percent Guatemalan students).

The first stop on the mission itinerary is Panama City, the capital city Panama. This visit will give the delegates an opportunity to visit local education institutions, network with members of AMCHAM and participate in an education fair for Panamanian agents and students.

After Panama, the group will travel to Honduras. The universities in Honduras are leaders in terms of education and research in Central America. Honduras also has the highest number of students enrolling in Intensive English.² CS Honduras will arrange for mission participants to participate in one on one meeting opportunities and a student recruitment fair in the beach city of San Pedro Sula.

¹ U.S. Department of State, *100,000 Strong in the Americas*, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2013/214201.htm>

² *Open Doors 2012: Intensive English Programs: All Places of Origin* published annually by IIE with support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Intensive-English-Programs/All-Places-of-Origin/2012>

Finally, the delegation will have the option to participate in a stop in Guatemala, to participate in a student recruitment fair and luncheon opportunity with key networking and potential business partners in country.

In each of the three locations all expenses related to the education fairs including venue rental, booth set up and booth breakdown will be included in the participation fee. The participation fee also covers networking events in country before and after the education fairs as well as the seminars on pertinent information for students studying in the U.S. It will also cover all promotional materials related to the education fair and the promotion thereof, but all schools will need to provide their own promotional materials for their individual institutions.

MISSION GOALS

The goals of the United States Education Mission to Central America are: 1) to help participants gain market exposure and to introduce participants to the vibrant Central American market in the cities of Panama City, San Pedro Sula and Guatemala City; 2) to help participants assess current and future business prospects by establishing valuable contacts with prospective students and educational institutions/partners; and 3) to help participants develop market knowledge and relationships leading to student recruitment and potential partnerships.

MISSION SCENARIO

Participation in the mission will include the following:

- Pre-travel briefings/webinars
- Embassy/consulate and industry briefings
- Reception with Ambassador (if available)
- Student Fairs and local visits organized by EducationUSA in Panama City and San Pedro Sula.
- Airport transfers
- Optional Third stop in Guatemala City with student fair organized by local contractors and presentations.

PROPOSED MISSION SCHEDULE – May 2-5, 2016

Panama City, Panama

Monday, May 2, 2016

- Arrive in Panama City
- Check into hotel
- Welcome Dinner and Embassy Briefing

Tuesday, May 3, 2016

- Group departure to secondary school and university visits
- Group lunch with American Chamber of Commerce/Panama
- Group return to hotel for one-on-one Appointments and Networking Opportunities

- Afternoon: Student Information Sessions and Education Fair organized by Educaiton USA in conjunction with the Commercial Service.

San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

- Group departs Panama City for San Pedro Sula
- Arrive in San Pedro Sula; Check into hotel
- Group Lunch and Country Briefing with U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, EducationUSA and U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer
- Networking coffee with local universities
- Afternoon: Student Information Sessions and Education Fair organized by Educaiton USA in conjunction with the Commercial Service.

Guatemala City, Guatemala (OPTIONAL)

Thursday, May 5, 2016 (OPTIONAL)

- Group departs to Guatemala City
- Arrive in Guatemala City; Check into Hotel
- Lunch and Embassy Briefing with U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service and Public Affairs
- One-on-one opportunities with local institutions
- Afternoon: Student Information Sessions and Education Fair organized by a local contractor in conjunction with the Commercial Service.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS:

All parties interested in participating in the mission to Central America must submit a complete application package for consideration to the U.S. Department of Commerce. All applicants will be evaluated on their ability to meet certain conditions and best satisfy the selection criteria as outlined below. Participants in the mission will be selected on a rolling basis to a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 20 appropriately accredited U.S. educational institutions. Both, U.S. educational institutions already recruiting students and developing partnerships in the region and those who are new to recruiting and developing partnerships in the region may apply. The optional stop of Guatemala City will also be available on a rolling basis up to a maximum of 10 participants.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION:

- Consistency of the applicant's goals and objectives with the stated scope of the mission
- Applicant's potential for doing business in Central America, including the likelihood of service exports (education) resulting from the mission.

Referrals from political organizations and any documents containing references to partisan political activities (including political contributions) will be removed from an applicant's submission and will not be considered during the selection process.

CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION:

An applicant must submit a timely, completed and signed mission application and supplemental application materials, including adequate information on course offerings, primary market objectives, and goals for participation. The institution must have appropriate accreditation as specified per paragraph one above. The institution must be represented at the student fair by an employee. No agents will be allowed to represent a school on the mission or participate at the student fair. Agents will also not be allowed into the fairs to solicit new partnerships. If the Department of Commerce receives an incomplete application, the Department may reject the application, request additional information, or take the lack of information into account when evaluating the applications.

Participants must travel to both stops in Panama and Honduras on the mission. Guatemala is the only optional stop.

Each applicant must certify that the services it seeks to export through the mission are either produced in the United States, or, if not, marketed under the name of a U.S. firm and have at least 51 percent U.S. content of the value of the service.

FEES AND EXPENSES:

After an institution has been selected to participate on the mission, a payment to the Department of Commerce in the form of a participation fee is required. The participation fee is \$2,550 for one principal representative from each non-profit educational institution or educational institution with less than 500 employees and \$2,939 for for-profit universities with over 500 employees³. An institution can choose to participate in the optional stop in Guatemala for an additional \$1,646 for one principal representative from each non-profit educational institution or educational institution with less than 500 employees and \$1,872 for for-profit universities with over 500 employees. The fee for each additional representative is \$500. Expenses for lodging, some meals, incidentals, and all travel (except for transportation to and from airports in-country, previously noted) will be the responsibility of each mission participant. The U.S. Department of Commerce can facilitate government rates in some hotels. The cost of participating in the student fairs at each location will be included in the registration fee.

TIMEFRAME FOR RECRUITMENT AND APPLICATIONS:

Mission recruitment will be conducted in an open and public manner, including publication in the Federal Register, posting on the Commerce Department trade mission calendar (<http://export.gov/industry/education/>) and other Internet web sites, press releases to general and trade media, direct mail, notices by industry trade associations and other multiplier groups, and publicity at industry meetings, symposia, conferences, and trade shows. Recruitment for the mission will begin immediately and conclude no later

³ An SME is defined as a firm with 500 or fewer employees or that otherwise qualifies as a small business under SBA regulations (see <http://www.sba.gov/services/contracting opportunities/sizestandardsttopics/index.html>). Parent companies, affiliates, and subsidiaries will be considered when determining business size. Non-profit educational institutions will be considered SMEs for purposes of this guidance. The dual pricing reflects the Commercial Service's user fee schedule that became effective May 1, 2008 (see <http://www.export.gov/newsletter/march2008/initiatives.html> for additional information).

than March 1, 2016. Applications for the mission will be accepted on a rolling basis. Applications received after March 1, 2016, will be considered only if space and scheduling constraints permit.

Contact Information:

U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service in Central America:

Laura Gimenez, Commercial Officer, El Salvador

Tel: (011-503) 2501-3221

Email: laura.gimenez@trade.gov

Aileen Nandi, Commercial Officer, El Salvador

Tel: (408) 535-2757, ext. 102

Email: aileen.nandi@trade.gov

U.S. Export Assistance Center:

Gabriela Zelaya, Silicon Valley USEAC

Tel: 408-535-2757, ext. 107

Email: gabriela.zelaya@trade.gov

Shelby Peterson, Salt Lake City USEAC

Tel: 801-255-1872

Email: Shelby.peterson@trade.gov

Sara Moreno, Lexington USEAC

Tel: 859-225-7001

Email: sara.moreno@trade.gov